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## McFarlane Acts on Reagan's Orders

# New Polygraphs, Censorship Shelved

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The White House this week firmly pledged to abandon "for the duration of this session of Congress" its plans to expand the use of polygraph tests throughout the government and to impose a lifetime censorship system on officials having access to especially sensitive information.

The commitment was made in a March 20 letter to Rep. Patricia Schroeder (D-Colo.) from White House national security adviser Robert C. McFarlane, who said he was acting on President Reagan's instructions.

McFarlane also promised that the administration would give interested members at least 90 days' notice of any future action to deter leaks, "to facilitate congressional involvement" in such decisions.

The pledge appeared to signal the death of the most controversial aspects of a directive that Reagan issued in the name of national security a year ago. The House Post Office and Civil Service Committee, in turn, postponed a subcommittee ses-

sion that had been scheduled yesterday to mark up a bill prohibiting the censorship and lie-detector programs. Congress voted last year to block them, but only through this April 15.

White House Counselor Edwin Meese III was a leading supporter of the Reagan effort to stop news "leaks," but White House chief of staff James A. Baker III and other presidential aides were strenuously opposed to the directive's most restrictive provisions.

Reagan's order would have required every federal employee with a security clearance to sign a non-disclosure pledge and to submit to lie detector tests if asked. It also said that those with so-called Sensitive Compartmented Information clearances would have to sign special agreements binding them, for life, to submit writings that might contain sensitive information, even if it was unclassified, for approval by government censors.

A General Accounting Office study said that the directive would have applied to 2.5 million federal

employees and another 1.5 million employees of government contractors. The lifetime censorship rules would have applied to about 128,000 people.

Reagan said last month that he would suspend the directive's two key provisions. McFarlane followed with a memo telling affected government agencies that implementation should be "held in abeyance."

But House Government Operations Committee Chairman Jack Brooks (D-Tex.), the sponsor of a bill to block the effort permanently, said he feared that the suspension was just "a tactical postponement" to quiet the controversy before the fall elections.

In his letter, McFarlane said that leaks of classified information were "a serious problem that will not go away and we therefore cannot completely foreclose future action along the lines" of the directive "if a legislative solution to unauthorized disclosures is not found." But he repeated that no such action would be taken "for the duration of this session."